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Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

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Monday, 25 March 2013, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Iliichev	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Di Luca
	Australia	Ms. King
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Tian Lin
	France	Mr. Briens
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Kim Sook
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	Togo	Mr. Afande
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Twenty-fifth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2013/124)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Twenty-fifth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2013/124)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Karin Landgren, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Staffan Tillander, Chair of the Liberian country configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and representative of Sweden, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/124, which contains the twenty-fifth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

I now give the floor to Ms. Landgren.

Ms. Landgren: As members have seen in the report of the Secretary-General before the Council (S/2013/124), Liberia continues to make significant progress as it approaches the 10-year anniversary of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Since that August in Accra in 2003, Liberia has shown the world its commitment to lasting peace, and the world has shown its commitment to peace in Liberia. The resilience that Liberians have demonstrated and their commitment to moving the country forward are inspiring and bode well for the hard work that still lies ahead.

Two months ago, Liberia hosted the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in a meeting that illustrated how far the country has come. In the words of Foreign Minister Augustine Ngafuan, it has moved from pariah to partner, from problem child to problem-solver. As he said, that is indisputably a remarkable achievement.

The report before the Council describes the security transition that began last October and in which the Government will progressively take over responsibilities from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). I will say more about that, but let me begin by updating the Council on the other critical processes that UNMIL is mandated to support and which will need to advance in tandem with the Mission's drawdown or, preferably, somewhat ahead of it.

The Constitution Review Committee, appointed last September, has been preparing options for that defining reform process. Only last week, President Johnson-Sirleaf agreed to add a year to the Committee's original short timeline. As the Secretary-General noted in his April 2012 special report (S/2012/230), many of Liberia's underlying tensions are perpetuated by the provisions of the Constitution. That makes it especially important to conduct an inclusive and participatory reform process. UNMIL is an active partner in that process, which, on the United Nations side, also includes the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme.

Even with the extension, the timeline is brisk. The Constitution Review Committee is expected to present its recommended revisions to the legislature by mid-2014. By law, at least 12 months must pass between the legislature's action on the recommendations and a popular referendum, which would now be held by late 2015. Electoral reform is also moving ahead. The National Elections Commission has held regional consultations on a draft electoral law and is discussing it with the legislature. The draft law features measures to ensure the independence of the Commission, which was a major call of the opposition during the 2011 elections.

The Land Commission has been conducting public consultations on a historic draft land rights policy that covers private, customary, Government and public land tenure. The policy will be considered at a national validation conference next month, with the involvement of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and UNMIL, and will form the basis of a new land rights law. That creates an opportunity for Liberia to move a step closer to addressing one of its principal sources of instability and conflict.

Liberia's first justice and security hub, supported by the Peacebuilding Fund as part of Liberia's peacebuilding plan, was launched on 12 February in Gbarnga, Bong County. Justice and security hubs have the potential to bring Liberians significantly better

access to justice and security services, and the Gbarnga hub will continue to need close attention even as the focus turns towards the development of hubs two and three, in Grand Gedeh and Maryland counties. Later this year, a review will be conducted of the impact of the first six months of hub one, but, so far, a major lesson is that services should be rolled out in tandem with the infrastructure. The plans for hubs two and three are being adjusted to provide an earlier focus on services.

There has been some progress in the area of accountability. The Supreme Court upheld five decisions of a judicial inquiry commission that had issued significant penalties, including the suspension of two judges, for corruption. In addition, the first case prosecuted by the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission resulted in a conviction against a former Inspector-General of the Liberia National Police (LNP) and four other defendants for embezzlement of funds intended for the LNP.

However, issues of corruption and tensions between branches of Government have remained at the forefront of political life. In February, the legislature ordered the Montserrado county superintendent detained in connection with allegations related to the misuse of development funds. The legislature then accused the acting Mayor of Monrovia of thwarting the detention and proceeded to a vote of no confidence against both women, who subsequently resigned. That incident has contributed to the undercurrent of mutual distrust among Liberia's primary political actors, a climate that can colour the country's ability to take forward processes critical to democratic governance and long-term stability, including constitutional reform and the fair and transparent management of natural resources.

Liberia's border with Côte d'Ivoire remains a significant focus for the Government and for UNMIL. Operation Restore Hope, conducted jointly by the Liberia National Police, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and the Armed Forces of Liberia, has continued since June 2012. Despite a number of challenges, the operation has proved a credible and responsive presence along the border. Following cross-border attacks last August, the border was largely calm for seven months, although clashes on the Ivorian side in January and March led to several deaths. In the past week, with reports of armed attacks in some Ivorian villages close to the border, increased attention is being given in Liberia to avoiding any cross-border activity that could be linked to such attacks. National security agencies, the UNMIL force and the United Nations police have carried out robust patrols, some jointly, in strategic areas of Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Nimba counties.

There has been no sign of any new refugee influx, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has also reported growing numbers of Ivorians returning home, with more than 5,200 so far in 2013. UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire continue our inter-mission cooperation at all levels and are working actively with both Governments to encourage the development of a common border strategy that takes cooperation beyond immediate security measures.

Ultimately, problems with political, economic and social roots require solutions of broad scope. We expect a follow-up quadripartite discussion, between the two countries and the two missions, next month to move this dialogue forward. I have just been informed that this is confirmed for 5 April.

In January, President Johnson-Sirleaf noted in her annual message that "the cleavages that led to decades of war still run deep". Efforts over the past decade have helped the country recover from conflict and set the stage for a transformed nation. But to realize that potential, those deep cleavages will need commensurate attention to institutionalize the foundations for Liberia's long-term stability.

As part of working towards those long-term solutions, in December the President held a national conference to launch the national Vision 2030 - a long-term political and economic agenda, including a fair political system, security, the rule of law and national reconciliation. For the first five years of the realization of the Vision, the Government has presented a development plan - successor to the first poverty reduction strategy - called the Agenda for Transformation, as well as a National Reconciliation Road Map, to sequence Liberia's enormous range of competing priorities.

The Agenda and the Road Map outline Liberia's path towards equitable growth and institutional development, and reflect the close links between reconciliation and development. The challenges are considerable, and I would draw particular attention to the need to achieve responsible and accountable exploitation and management in the race for resource

extraction, where concessions, abuse and allegations of corruption, already a source of significant tension, have the potential to act as a catalyst for conflict. The Government is conscious of those dangers and has taken some steps to mitigate the risks, but much more remains to be done.

At this point, let me read into the record a correction to paragraph 9 of the report of the Secretary-General, namely, that one deputy to the Auditor-General resigned, not two.

Since my last briefing (see S/PV.6830), planning for the security transition has moved to implementation. UNMIL has begun its next military drawdown under resolution 2066 (2012), and now, for the first time since 2005, UNMIL's military is not permanently deployed in every one of Liberia's 15 counties. So far, military personnel have vacated two counties and will leave another two next month. Meanwhile, the Nepali formed police unit (FPU), the first of three new FPUs, deployed in full today. During the rainy-season hiatus, the Government and UNMIL will continue detailed planning and preparations for the next phase. The drawdown and reconfiguration have been possible through the hard work of the joint Government-UNMIL transition working group, which primes all national security actors to assume their added responsibilities and to make effective use of the former UNMIL facilities.

In October, UNMIL handed over the first of its facilities to national authorities at Robertsport, in Grand Cape Mount County, and a second facility, in Foya, near the Guinean and Sierra Leonean borders in Lofa County, was handed over in January. Between October and April, UNMIL's military will have withdrawn from seven sites, of which the Government has taken over four. This first phase of transition has been relatively successful, but, from a security perspective, also relatively undemanding. Even so, the Government of Liberia has been stretched to deploy sufficient resources, equipment and personnel to make good use of the vacated sites and to cover the recurrent costs of maintaining them. UNMIL and the Government will soon hold a retreat to cost out transition needs through mid-2015 and for the Government to plan how to make those resources available.

As the Mission hands over locations and security functions, the United Nations and partners continue to invest in the development of Liberia's justice and security sectors. To gauge progress and inform strategic planning, several studies are under way, including a review, funded by the Peacebuilding Fund, of management and accountability mechanisms within the police, judiciary and prosecution, and a baseline capacity assessment of the Liberia National Police. Over the coming months, UNMIL and national partners will also be part of a security sector reform mapping exercise to identify gaps, and tomorrow a national criminal justice conference, supported by UNMIL, is opening, to review and make recommendations for the improved functioning of all components of the criminal justice system.

The Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) active engagement, including last month's joint visit by the Liberia and Sierra Leone country configurations, has generated sustained attention and discussion on these critical justice and security issues. The PBC is a valued partner in bringing Liberia's peacebuilding issues to the fore, and Ambassador Tillander's continued efforts in mobilizing the required resources have been vital.

Women and girls in Liberia continue to face a high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, often of young children. As Liberia grapples with those issues, I would like to congratulate Liberia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Marjon Kamara, for the landmark resolution reached by the Commission on the Status of Women under her chairmanship, in which members commit to the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

Addressing the Legislative Assembly in January, President Johnson-Sirleaf spoke robustly of the need for economic justice and the spread of opportunity for all, saying that Liberia would never develop unless Liberians worked together as a team. When Liberians tell me what reconciliation means to them, most of them talk about employment and better services. Lasting peace will require fairness and inclusion for all Liberians in their country's progress. It is more important than ever, as UNMIL draws down, to move swiftly to address the historic and current cleavages that are so widely acknowledged. The United Nations and all of Liberia's partners continue to stand by in support of the legitimate and democratic aspirations of Liberians, who also tell us repeatedly that they have no wish to return to war.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Landgren for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Tillander.

Mr. Tillander: The visit of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to Liberia and Sierra Leone last month, with participation from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Egypt, Japan, Kuwait, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, demonstrated the commitment to peacebuilding in Liberia and the region. I am very grateful for the warm welcome and support from the Government, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the entire United Nations system.

The visit allowed us to consult with the Government on how to accelerate progress on security sector reform, the rule of law and national reconciliation, in accordance with resolution 2066 (2012). I appreciate this opportunity to report to the Council on those aspects. During the visit, the first regional justice and security hub was inaugurated in Gbarnga. This is one of the many steps needed to advance Liberia's progress in extending services, justice and security to communities around the country. This is an essential component of institution-building in Liberia and for consolidating mutual trust and respect between the State and its people. As President Johnson-Sirleaf stated at the launch ceremony,

> "The opening of this first hub, in the nation's heartland, is confirmation that we mean what we say about decentralizing services to all parts of this country. The presence of this hub, and of the others to follow, will ensure access to justice and to quality security service fo. all Liberians."

Efforts should continue to ensure that the provision of quality justice and security services is a reality. We count on the Government of Liberia to make the appropriate provisions, including planning and budget allocations for recurring costs and delivery of services. At the same time, we must now focus on the services and activities that should be provided through the second and third hubs, located in Zwedru and Harper. We have agreed with the Government that a year from now, the PBC will visit and assess the range of services in place and offered to the people in the surrounding communities.

This focus on implementing and providing services quickly is very challenging. The Government must establish a budget for recurring costs, training and deployment; the United Nations Development Programme must start to implement the hubs' service components; gender advisers, judges, outreach and public services should be quickly put in place; the United Nations Office for Project Services must without delay provide innovative infrastructure solutions, some of them temporary; financing committed through the Peacebuilding Fund should be made available as indicated, with a focus on facilitating the speedy delivery of services. Applying lessons learned from the Gbarnga hub is essential; if we get this right, the hub concept may serve as a model for other countries.

But the hub concept must be implemented within a holistic, coordinated and balanced approach to justice and security, including the entire rule-of-law chain. The outcome of the review of the Justice and Security Joint Programme will help strengthen its effectiveness and its function in setting priorities. The result should provide a basis for a comprehensive approach, with agreed indicators and benchmarks in support of Government actions that should also guide the United Nations system and bilateral partners. Government ownership is of fundamental importance. In line with the statement of mutual commitments, and as a sign of its commitment, Liberia has increased the allocation for justice and security in this year's budget. Its timely disbursement will be the basis for implementing programmes, ensuring partners' full support and keeping step with UNMIL's transition.

Work on a police law is under way under the leadership of the Minister of Justice. It has been given the highest priority and includes the professionalization of the police and the chain of command as well as proper oversight and complaint mechanisms. The PBC will be prepared to continue to assist in identifying creative approaches to fill specialized UNMIL posts, using the various tools available and relevant new funding mechanisms.

National reconciliation is another core peacebuilding priority. That is also an area where there is a need for leadership and resolve. As the Commission discussed with the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Blamoh Nelson, in a video teleconference last week, various strands within the National Reconciliation Road Map should now be implemented in an inclusive and coordinated manner. The role and mandate of the various institutions and actors involved in the implementation still need to be clarified. Government funds allocated should be made available in a timely manner, and

financing mechanisms based on the Road Map will offer opportunities for international partners to support coordinated implementation. Exchanging experiences with other countries that have been in similar situations could also promote the reconciliation process. The PBC can offer a platform for facilitating such exchanges and for promoting third-party commitments of necessary resources.

The Minister of Gender and Development, Ms. Julia Duncan-Cassell, participated in a PBC configuration breakfast meeting during the session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and reminded us of the measures that are needed to prevent gender-based violence, such as working with men and women and ensuring women's participation in decision-making. The Peacebuilding Fund and UN-Women have initiated discussions to help identify areas needing support, and such efforts should be encouraged. In order to support various groups of youth, including women and girls, the United Nations system, together with the international financial institutions and bilateral partners, should work with the Government and civil society to address gaps in that area.

Regarding land and resources, representatives of civil society expressed concern during the PBC's last visit about the lack of community participation, the limited role of women and the fact that some concessions do not necessarily lead to improved livelihoods for the host communities. There should be further support and encouragement for Government efforts to strengthen laws, policies and institutions aimed at resolving existing disputes and preventing the mismanagement of land and natural resources, including measures to stop the misuse of private-use permits, for example, and to bring those responsible to justice.

Finally, I welcome the cooperation between the Government and the PBC in addressing the mutual commitments made, starting in November 2010, and renewed and adopted last week, after the second review. The Government has demonstrated its commitment by increasing its efforts, including through budgetary provisions, to support justice, security and national reconciliation. The PBC is committed to working with the Government to implement the statement of mutual commitments and to align it with Government priorities and peace- and State-building goals, thus avoiding duplication, ensuring effective coordination and channelling resources more efficiently in support of the Government's peacebuilding objectives. That approach will help stakeholders focus on critical issues and provide an environment conducive to the transition and eventual drawdown of UNMIL. I look forward to the intensification of our efforts and the full support of the Security Council, and I stand ready to report back to the Council on progress made.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Tillander for his briefing.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on this subject.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.